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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#)
OREP (PELOSI, NANCY), HK
SUBJECT: CODEL PELOSI MEETING WITH HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL MEMBERS

REF: HONG KONG 139

Classified By: Consul General Joe Donovan for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A far-ranging meeting May 29 between CODEL Pelosi and seventeen of Hong Kong's most active (and vocal) legislators covered a range of issues, with pan-democratic legislators calling for U.S. support on human rights in China and Hong Kong's democratic development. Pro-establishment parties focused on the CODEL's interest in environmental cooperation and Hong Kong's efforts at home and on the Mainland. In addition, legislators urged the United States to do more to screen departing passengers so as to prevent the spread of H1N1. Speaker Pelosi and the delegation stressed their continued interest in Hong Kong's democratic development, noting the importance of consultations to be held by year's end on the next stage of democratic reforms (reftel). She also assured legislators human rights would remain a key element of U.S.-China dialogue. On the environment, she noted the critical importance of addressing climate issues now, as well as the issue's multidimensional impact on energy security, the economy, health, and our moral commitment to the well-being of our planet. End summary.

President Tsang introduces LegCo

¶2. (SBU) On May 29, Legislative Council (LegCo) President Jasper Tsang welcomed CODEL Pelosi to a series of meetings at LegCo. He first briefed the delegation on both the current makeup of LegCo (30 directly-elected geographic seats, 30 functional seats). Noting that the eventual goal was to elect all seats in accordance with universal suffrage, he also noted support in some sectors for maintaining some element of the sectoral representation currently filled by the functional constituencies (FCs). While the FCs as currently constituted are not seen as compliant with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 25, there is considerable thought being given to models which might make FCs compatible with universal suffrage. Tsang admitted no conclusions had been reached.

¶3. (SBU) Tsang noted that political parties in Hong Kong were still young and relatively weak. Even the largest -- his own Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) -- held only ten seats and had only 10,000 members. Moreover, while some like the DAB were reckoned as pro-government, members did not hesitate to oppose the government if its policies conflicted with the views of their constituents. Thus, the government was forced to build coalitions with a range of small parties to pass any legislation. Tsang contended that development of parties would need to be a part of Hong Kong's overall democratic development, including an eventual end to the strict division between the non-partisan executive and the parties in LegCo.

Democracy and Human Rights

14. (C) After his introductory discussion with the delegation, Tsang handed the chair over to DAB Chairman Tam Yiu-chung and departed. Tam chaired the second meeting, which brought together sixteen of Hong Kong's most prominent legislators for an interparliamentary dialogue. Pan-democrats stressed their concerns about the future of Hong Kong's democratic development amid what they felt was a growing encroachment by the central government on Hong Kong's authority. Of particular concern was ensuring universal suffrage truly met the standards of ICCPR Article 25, which for the pan-democrats meant the certain elimination of the FCs. They also warned against the current 800-person election committee for the Chief Executive potentially becoming a nominating committee that undemocratically filtered candidates for the Chief Executive. They urged the United States and broader international community to remain focused on Hong Kong, including through a resumption of reports under the U.S. Hong Kong Policy Act. They also urged the United States not to allow economic concerns to cause attention to human rights issues in China to waver.

15. (C) Of the pro-establishment forces, only DAB legislator Starry Lee chose to take on the pan-democrats. She reminded them and the delegation that, while all sides including the DAB supported the goal of elections by universal suffrage, the requirement was to reach a consensus among the people of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong government, and the central government on how to proceed forward. The only other mention

HONG KONG 00000984 002 OF 003

from the establishment side was to note that, in a recent poll, 72 percent of Hong Kong citizens believed one country, two systems was working well. The democrats noted that the same poll showed 60 percent of Hong Kong people wanted universal suffrage.

Environment and the Economy

16. (C) Pro-establishment members (mainly from the pro-business Liberal Party and business-related FCs) concurred in the CODEL's emphasis on environmental cooperation and engagement with the Mainland. They noted Hong Kong's own efforts, such as changing over its entire taxi fleet to liquefied petroleum gas. They also noted efforts to establish sustainable environmental improvements in industries on the Mainland, including clustering more polluting industries on special industrial parks so as to offer specialized waste management. Several hoped the United States would expand its exchanges in the area of environmental technology with Hong Kong and the Mainland. A few members criticized the role of Lehman minibonds in the financial crisis and also suggested pressure to keep prices low for products produced using cheaper Chinese labor worked against improving environmental standards.

17. (C) From the pan-democrats, Civic Party Leader Audrey Eu noted there was a certain statistical sleight-of-hand by the Hong Kong government. While the government was correct that Hong Kong's emissions were low compared with GDP, they are growing in real terms. In addition, Hong Kong government statistics do not capture emissions generated by citizens traveling by air, which are considerable for many Hong Kong residents. Hong Kong still lacks emissions targets, she noted, to which Rep. Markey replied that the United States also has not yet set such targets. Legislators from both the pan-democratic and pro-establishment camps expressed hope that the United States and China would reach agreement on environmental goals in Copenhagen.

18. (C) Legislators from the Democratic Party (DPHK), led by DPHK Vice Chair Emily Lau, took the delegation to task over what they felt was a failure by the United States to prevent the spread of H1N1. They called on the United States to more strictly screen departing passengers for symptoms of H1N1. The Speaker countered that the United States was in fact taking H1N1 very seriously. She recalled a gathering at her grandson's church for First Communion involving over a thousand people. A reception was to have followed the ceremony. However, organizers pulled her aside and told her, as one of the students involved in the ceremony was diagnosed with flu, they were required to end the ceremony and close the affiliated school for two weeks. They further asked her not to greet parishioners, since they feared the physical contact in a receiving line might spread the disease. The Speaker pointed out (to nods from the pan-democrats) the challenge of screening for H1N1, since sick people became contagious before they exhibited symptoms. That said, she stressed the United States was responding appropriately to H1N1.

The Speaker Addresses the Issues

19. (C) In addition to her intervention on H1N1, Speaker Pelosi responded to a number of the issues raised:

Human Rights in China: The Speaker noted that there would be commemorations of June 4 next week in Washington. Her delegation had stressed in Beijing that there was a bipartisan consensus in the Congress that human rights was a core element of U.S. policy and our dialogue with China.

Hong Kong's Democratic Development: The Speaker contended the Congress gave up considerable leverage in pushing for democracy in Hong Kong by not linking it to permanent Most Favored Nation status for China. That said, she said the Congress remains keenly interested in the issue and hopes for Hong Kong's success in moving to universal suffrage. She noted that the support for one country, two systems cited by the pro-establishment camp rests on people's belief that a timetable has been set for universal suffrage. She reiterated comments made to LegCo President Tsang about the

HONG KONG 00000984 003 OF 003

U.S. support for the Chief Executive's commitment to begin consultation on democratic reforms this year.

Environment and Energy: Calling climate change "the challenge of this generation," the Speaker noted the relationship between environmental issues and U.S. energy independence and energy costs, business opportunities and jobs linked to environmental technologies, human health, and even our moral obligations as stewards of the planet. She and her colleagues have traveled to Europe, Asia and even Alaska to see first hand the very real impact of climate change on the planet and how other countries are addressing the issues. The Speaker called for international cooperation based on transparency and accountability.

The Economy: The Speaker noted that the Congress and the Obama Administration hoped to address the current financial crisis by taking a long-term view of energy, education and health care needs. She joined LegCo members criticism of the failure of the Lehman minibonds, noting many investors in the United States had been left with no remedy following the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

Participants

¶10. (U) United States:

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Mr. Paul Pelosi
Consul General Joseph Donovan
Rep. Edward Markey
Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Mr. Jon Blumenauer (son)
Rep. Jay Inslee
Congressional staff and military escorts.

Hong Kong:

Hon. Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, LegCo President (Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB))
Hon. Tam Yiu-chung (Chairman, DAB)
Hon. Starry Lee Wai-kin (DAB)
Hon. Audrey Eu Yuet-mee (Leader, Civic Party)
Hon. Alan Leong Kah-kit (Vice Chair, Civic Party)
Hon. Ronny Tong Ka-wah (Civic Party)
Hon. Albert Ho Chun-yan (Chairman, Democratic Party of Hong Kong (DPHK))
Hon. Emily Lau Wai-hing (Vice Chair, DPHK)
Hon. James To Kun-sun (DPHK)
Hon. Miriam Lau Kin-yee (Chairwoman, Liberal Party)
Hon. Tommy Cheung Yu-yan (Deputy Chair, Liberal Party)
Hon. Cyd Ho Sau-lan (Civic Act-up; Pan-democratic Caucus Convenor)
Hon. Lee Cheuk-yan (Confederation of Trade Unions)
Hon. Abraham Shek Lai-him (Professional Forum)
Hon. Priscilla Leung (Professional Forum)
Hon. Andrew Leung Kwan-yuen (Independent)
Hon. Jeffrey Lam Kin-fung (Independent)
Staff of the LegCo Commission

¶11. (U) CODEL Pelosi cleared this message.
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